

CIA, Not Mercenaries Target of Angola Trial

By Rubin Wright

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LISBON, June 10—"The Americans, they are nothing . . . We are not out to get them, only the people who sent them in."

In saying this, Rui Monteiro, Angolan prosecutor for the trial of 13 foreign mercenaries in Luanda, zeroed in on the government purpose in holding the trial, which has become a media event in Angola, even overshadowing coverage of the new nation's first election, two weeks from now.

The real "verdict" at the end of the tribunal is expected to be a strong warning to Western powers—issued in the name of all new and "progressive" governments—that they can no longer expect to be able to promote their systems or sympathizers through military involvement and mercenary troops.

The 13 mercenaries, including three Americans, were captured in the last days of the Angolan civil war which pitted the pro-Soviet Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola against two pro-Western groups. As to the Americans, Monteiro said, "They were there only a few days and committed no atrocities. One is a baby." Technically all are threatened with death sentences.

Perhaps the most ominous sign of the tone of the event is the official attitude toward the foreign press.

London Daily Telegraph reporter Gerald Kemp was officially reprimanded by Angolan Director of Infor-

serve the event and afterward write a report on the mercenary phenomenon."

The government asked me to testify at the trial about information I obtained when I spent four days with the mercenaries in San Antonio do Zaire in early February. One of them, Derek Barker of Aldershot, England, is among the 13 going on trial Friday.

"It gives special credibility to the evidence to hear from a Western journalist who saw them in action," the state prosecutor explained during one of three interviews when he demanded my testimony.

I refused, on grounds that I went to Angola as a journalist, not as a participant, and that it would break the journalists' code of professional ethics to get involved in an event I was covering. I added that all the information I had was published and on public record.

On Tuesday, four days after the third interview I was arrested and detained for 28 hours by the secret police, or DISA, who tried to intimidate me into giving testimony.

The DISA official who interrogated me for four hours yesterday used several tactics to coerce agreement. At first, he said the government was still considering pressing charges against me for being with the mercenaries and that they believed I was an American intelligence agent.

He said I could bargain for my freedom on 14 by testifying. I refused.

He also said I would be released if I agreed to provide regular intelligence reports to his office on developments in the United States and the southern African countries I cover. I refused.

The official, who would not divulge his name, then said he would let me see the entire seven volumes of evidence if I agreed to verify the material with which I was charged. I refused.

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mation Luis de Almeida, yesterday, for an editorial his paper ran on the trial.

The authorities resent any charges that the tribunal will be a "show" affair. They have struggled to give it legitimacy by inviting the foreign press to attend, allowing an American lawyer to defend two of the mercenaries and a British official to witness the trial, and by establishing an international commission of inquiry to ob-

said he would let me see the entire seven volumes of evidence if I agreed to verify was familiar. I refused again.

At that point he abruptly left the room without telling me my status or how much longer I would be detained.

Before my return to Luanda, officials of the victorious Popular Movement for the Liberation were aware that I had reported from the north on the alleged execution of 14 British mercenaries by mercenary commander "Colonel Callan," the war name of Cyprus-born Costas Georgiou. One MPLA official even congratulated me on the story shortly after my arrival June 1.

There was never any attempt to harm me bodily. I was allowed a meal from the Tropico Hotel, for which I had to pay. I was even allowed to call my parents in Michigan when I expressed concern about how the news of my detention would affect my father's heart condition. I was expelled early this morning.

The best explanation for the action my have come from the MPLA army commander who escorted me to the airport—and who led the attack on San Antonio do Zaire.

"This trial is very important to us and our progressive allies," he said. "At the most important time, when we are trying to etill the big powers that they cannot force their ways on new nations through military adl to our enemies or mercendaries, you refused to help verify the facts."

"That weakens our case in the eyes of the people we are trying to send a message to. If you won't help us tell the truth, we can't let you stay"

That message was clear. The Angolan government plans to make a strong case and wants nothing to stand in the way.

Far from centering on specific criminal charges against 13 individuals, the trial will pointedly focus on "mercenarism"—foreign intervention. It will be a political trial, Almeida admitted this week, "with a message your people should listen to".